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The Puritan's Ballad

By ELINOR WYLIE

My love came up from Barnegat;
The sea was in his eyes;
He trod as softly as a cat
And told me terrible lies.

His hair was yellow as new-cut pine
In shavings curled and feathered;
I thought how silver it would shine
By cruel winters weathered.

But he was in his twentieth year
This time I'm speaking of;
We were head over heels in love with fear
And half afeared of love.

My hair was piled in a copper crown,
A devilish wriggling thing;
And the tortoise-shell pins fell down, fell down,
When that snake uncoiled to spring.

His feet were used to treading a gale
And balancing thereon;
His face was brown as a foreign sail
Threadbare against the sun.

Within his arms I feared to sink
Where lions shook their manes,
And dragons drawn in azure ink
Leapt quickened by his veins.

But our palms were welded by a flame
The moment we came to part,
And on his knuckles I read my name
Enscrolled within a heart.

And something made our wills to bend
As wild as trees blown over;
We were no longer friend and friend
But only lover and lover.

"In seven weeks or seventy years—
God grant it may be sooner—
I'll make a handkerchief for your tears
From the sails of my Captain's schooner.

We'll wear our loves like wedding rings
Long polished to the touch,
We shall be busy with other things
And they cannot bother us much.

When you are skimming the wrinkled cream
And your ring clinks on the pan,
You'll say to yourself in a pensive dream,
'How wonderful a man!'

When I am slitting a fish's head
And my ring clanks on the knife,
I'll say with thanks, as a prayer is said,
'How beautiful a wife!'

And I shall fold my decorous paws
In velvet smooth and deep,
Like a kitten that covers up its claws
To sleep and sleep and sleep.

Like a little blue pigeon you shall bow
Your bright alarming crest;
In the crook of my arm you'll lay your brow
To rest and rest and rest."

Will he never come back from Barnegat
With thunder in his eyes,
Treading as soft as a tiger-cat
To tell me terrible lies?

The Carnival

A DIVINE COMEDY IN ONE ACT

By PAUL ELDRIDGE

CHARACTERS IN THE ORDER OF THEIR RECOGNITION:

THE JESTER OF THE GODS
FLOWER-GIRL
BALLOON-MAN
HARPIST
GYPSY WOMAN
MONK
BEGGAR WOMAN
DONNA LEGGIERA
MAN
JESTER
GIRL
CAVALIER IN BLUE
CAVALIER IN GREEN
PIERROT AND COLUMBINE. Two Couples
MAN WITH PARROT
YOUNG MAN
BOY
MOTHER
SOLDIERS
CAVALIER IN YELLOW
PUNCH
MANNIKINS

*All these are dressed typically, so as to
be easily recognizable.*

*The rest of the characters will be
known as voices, they are both men and
women. One should use one's imagina-
tion who would say one thing or an-
other.*

FIRST SCENE

The curtain rises and shows:

PARADISE—

*A garden as described in the Holy
Bible. An ordinary garden, therefore,
with the sole difference that every-
thing therein is much larger.. Being*

*situated at a very high altitude, the
sun is nearly on a level with it, and
appears like a great spider, whose yel-
low and white webs trail about the
ground, capture the languorous worms,
encircle the trunks of trees, unite the
tips of leaves.*

*The Garden is very much neglected.
The fence is rusty and sunken in; the
grass is uncut; the ground unswept and
littered with feathers from the wings of
angels and of birds; the well, almost on
a level with the ground in the center,
is filled with dirty water, about which
swarms of giant mosquitoes make great
circles.*

*From time to time an old bird with
a raucous voice utters a cry like the
sharpening of a knife, or a snake hisses.*

*In the extreme right hand corner an
enormous bush from which emerge
roars of laughter. The gods—for there
are many, in which respect the Holy
Bible erred—are amusing themselves,
as usual. They are never seen, but their
bulky shadows sieving through the
bush, shake with merriment. The
laughter stops. One hears now the play-
ing of a harp, evidently an enormous,
untuned instrument. The playing is
poor and uncertain, and the voice that
tries to keep in unison, only succeeds in
uttering colossal roars. The laughter
recommences—a gigantic cataract of
water tumbling over pointed rocks...
THE JESTER OF THE GODS breaks
through the bush. By the manner in
which he trips, he has evidently been*

pushed out by many hands or kicked by many feet. A great unseemly harp is hurled after him. He dodges it, and tries to walk rapidly to the center of the stage, but it is quite evident that he has drunk too much, and so he staggers on as well as he can. The Jester of the Gods looks just like the conventional jester of the Kings, except that he is, as everything else in Paradise, much taller. His apparel shows that his masters are certainly not over-generous. The gods laugh.

JESTER

(Threatening with his fist.) Stop! Stop!

(The gods laugh.)

JESTER

(Petulantly.) Always laughing! Always.

(The gods laugh.)

JESTER

Stop! Stop! (He sits down near the well.)

(The gods laugh.)

JESTER

(Irritated.) Always I must amuse them, and after, they throw me out and laugh, laugh.

(The gods laugh.)

JESTER

Who cares?

(The gods laugh.)

JESTER

(Threateningly.) I'll hurl a thunderbolt at them! I'll catch one in the center and hurl it—and then I shall laugh—I! Hohohohoh!

(The gods laugh.)

JESTER

Laugh on! laugh on!

JESTER

Who cares?

(The gods laugh.)

(The Jester yawns, a long low yawn, that might be the roar of a lion.)

(The gods laugh.)

(The Jester yawns, a long loud yawn, continues to yawn.)

(The gods laugh.)

JESTER

(Grumbling.) Certainly laugh—certainly—

(The gods laugh.)

JESTER

Some day—wait—Hohohohoh—

(The gods laugh.)

(His voice weakens, and becomes inarticulate.)

(The gods laugh.)

JESTER

A thunderbolt—that's it against the bush—

(The gods laugh.)

JESTER

Hohohohoh—

(The gods laugh.)

JESTER

Laugh on—

(The gods laugh.)

(The Jester continues to grumble, but his words are entirely indistinct. His eyes close. He begins to breathe deeply. Soon his breathing changes into snoring. He chases wearily with one hand the mosquitoes that circle about his face. His snoring which at first was light, has now become a tremendous thing—the rolling of a hundred French r's. The mosquitoes have become supreme masters of the situation.)

(The gods laugh.)

THE CARNIVAL

Several minutes have elapsed since *The Jester of the Gods* has fallen asleep, —time enough, assuredly for all the geological periods to have disappeared, and for civilization to blossom upon the Earth.

The curtain rises upon a multitude of people. The Carnival—Life. Lanterns, balloons, flowers, music. For a few minutes one can hardly distinguish one thing from another. Just a mass of people wandering up and down, and in circles, mingling, pushing, avoiding one another. Having gotten accustomed to the sight, one begins to distinguish things. In the center near the edge of the stage, like a prompter's box, one notices a fountain, and a man dressed like a jester sitting on its rim. The water of the fountain is not running now. On the extreme right a high column painted black, with an opening at the top, and an alcove scooped in the center. In the alcove, the figure of a Clown. His palms are open, one slightly below the other, as if weighing something. Where his heart should be; a deep red scar,—a slot for coins to be dropped. On the left, a man, blind and one-armed, holding between his knees a harp, whose strings he vibrates, as he sings in a racous voice the words —“In the merry, merry month of June.” Near him on a side his hat into which passers-by throw coins from time to time; on the other, a gypsy woman, cards spread out before her. Farther back left, a small platform with a curtain about it, upon which the heads of *Punch* and *Judy* are embroidered.

Further back, various amusements, —a merry-go-round, a cafe,—all the usual things which make man the

happiest and proudest creature on earth. But these things having no part in the play, may simply be paintings upon a large canvass. As indeed the whole thing may be.

FLOWER-GIRL

(Wandering among the people.)

Roses, carnations, dahlias!

BALLOON-MAN

Balloons! Balloons! Balloons!

HARPIST

In the merry month of June—In the merry, merry month of June.

GYPSY WOMAN

Your fortune told! Your fortune told!

BALLOON-MAN

Many balloons! Balloons!

FLOWER-GIRL

Roses! Carnations! Roses!

(And people wandering up and down and in circles. A joyous day. The sun has passed the meridian. It is not too warm to be passing up and down, and in circles.)

FLOWER-GIRL

Roses! Roses!

GYPSY WOMAN

Your fortune told!

BEGGAR

(Wandering among people) Charity! Charity! Charity!

HARPIST

In the merry, merry month of June.

MONK

(Appearing at the opening of the column on the right.) Oh wicked people, have you forgotten your God? Have you forgotten Him who never born shall never die? Have you forgotten the tortures that await you for the vain pleasures on earth? For every rose you cherish, a great flame consuming you a hundred years; for every vain song

tortures that will make you scream like beasts slaughtered with dull knives for a thousand years; for every vain laugh endless cataracts of boiling lead poured into your throats! Repent, O wicked people! Fall at the feet of your God, who never born, shall never die! Repent, O chasers after vain pleasures!

FLOWER-GIRL

Roses! Carnations! Roses!

BALLOON-MAN

Balloons! Balloons!

MONK

Are there none among you who long for eternal life and eternal joy at the feet of our God? Are there none here who are willing to sacrifice the pleasures of a single day for an eternity of delight?

HARPIST

In the merry, merry month of June—

BEGGAR WOMAN

Charity! Charity!

GYPSY WOMAN

Your fortune told!

MONK

Your souls shall be judged in his dazzling palms. His palms are a perfect balance, and he weighs most justly.

VOICE

What are souls?

MONK

Your soul torn out of your body shall tremble like a newly-slaughtered lamb in His hands. Shall your soul say:—

“Oh, Lord, I have suffered, I have repented,—therefore let me live! Or shall it say, lamenting,—“ O Lord I have enjoyed the vain pleasures of Earth. Alas, I know now my penalty shall be great and long!”

GYPSY WOMAN

Your fortune told! Your fortune told.

FLOWER-GIRL

Roses, carnations, dahlias!

MONK

Awaken, O wicked people! Awaken! Repent!

(He disappears inside of the opening of the column.)

BEGGAR WOMAN

(Stopping before the clown in the alcove of the column, places a coin in the slot, where the heart should be, and kneels.) Be merciful to me, O Lord! I am not enjoying myself. Let my reward be great! *(She rises.)* Charity! Charity!

DONNA LEGGIERA

(Leaving the arm of MAN, drops a coin in the clown, and prostrates herself.) O Lord, I shall sin no more,—forgive me! Forgive a poor sinner!

MAN

Come on there, what's this?

DONNA LEGGIERA

My sins have been many and heavy, O Lord—forgive them!

MAN

(Trying to raise her.) I have no time for this tom-foolery.

DONNA LEGGIERA

Shall I burn forever? Shall my throat be filled with lead, O God, who never born shall never die?

MAN

(Pulling her away.) I told you I have no time. Come on!

DONNA LEGGIERA

(Looking up.) Who are you?

MAN

What! Who I am! You've just taken my money, and now you ask me who I am. You can't fool around with me! I mean business. I am a businessman.

DONNA LEGGIERA

(As in a daze.) Money? I'll give you back the money.

MAN

I don't want my money back. I want what I paid for.

(Several people have gathered about)

VOICES

What's the trouble What's wrong?

MAN

I paid her, and now she makes believe she's converted.

(People laugh.)

MAN

(To Donna Leggiera.) Come on now! I told you I'm in a hurry. I have other things to attend to.

DONNA LEGGIERA

I give you back the money.

MAN

I don't want my money, do you hear? I want what I bargained for.

(People laugh.)

VOICE

He is right.

VOICE

Certainly—

VOICE

But if she gives back—

VOICE

She has no right to give back—

MAN

Come on! (He lifts her up.) Come on! (He drags her away. There is laughter.)

FLOWER-GIRL

Carnations! Roses!

JESTER

They are laughing—they are laughing—they are laughing.

(Several people stop.)

VOICE

They are laughing—ha, haha!

VOICE

That's a splendid way to begin—

VOICE

He is an artist.

VOICE

No preliminaries.

VOICE

They are laughing—they are laughing—hahaha!

JESTER

They are laughing—they are laughing—

VOICE

Go on.

VOICE

Go ahead!

(Many people are around the jester. Laughter circulates, its echo continuing farther and farther in the rear.)

JESTER

(His head between his hands.) They are laughing.

(His pathetic way of saying "they are laughing" adds to the amusement.)

VOICE

(Lamenting.) They are laughing.

Who, Jester?

VOICE

Why, Jester?

VOICE

A good title for a novel.

VOICE

For a comedy, I should say.

VOICE

Or a tragedy.

JESTER

They are laughing—they are laughing—

VOICE

Is this all?

VOICE

Just they are laughing?

VOICE

What is said to make them laugh?

VOICE

And how is it said?

JESTER

They are laughing.

VOICE

Come on, tell it to us.

VOICE

The suspense is equal to hanging by this time.

VOICE

Good.

VOICE

Jokes get stale pretty quickly.

VOICE

I think he means to let us imagine the rest.

VOICE

What I can imagine would make a dead monk laugh.

(Laughter in the crowd.)

JESTER

(Almost to himself.) They are laughing.

VOICE

Come on!

(Several people leave.)

VOICE

He's making fun of us, don't you see?

VOICE

He's clever anyway.

VOICE

"They," means "us,"—don't you understand? Therefore, we are laughing.

That's not bad, after all. Hahahah! We are laughing before we are laughing.

VOICE

Suggestive.

VOICE

He won't say another word now.

VOICE

He's got us all fooled.

VOICE

Fine, Jester, the joke's good!

*(All disperse, calling about for a few**minutes in different tones. "They are laughing.")*

JESTER

(His head buried in his hands, muttering.) They are laughing—

FLOWER-GIRL

Roses! Carnations! Dahlias!

BALLOON-MAN

Balloons! Balloons!

BEGGAR WOMAN

Charity! Charity!

GYPSY WOMAN

Your fortune told! Your fortune told!

(GIRL AND CAVALIER IN BLUE remain standing before the Gypsy. Girl is dressed and looks like a Madonna.)

GIRL

Let her tell us our fortune, dear.

CAVALIER IN BLUE

With you, sweetheart, my fortune will always be good.

GIRL

(Patting his arm.) But let us hear when we shall get married and how many children we'll have.

CAVALIER IN BLUE

Wicked little girl.

GYPSY WOMAN

(Has meanwhile spread out her cards.)

GYPSY WOMAN

First the lady's

CAVALIER IN BLUE

(With a last effort to avoid the reading.) Come dear, our fortune—

GIRL

(Covering daintily his mouth.) Let's listen to the Gypsy.

GYPSY WOMAN

(Reading.) The lady loves a gentleman—with blue eyes—and she is loved by him—surely—

GIRL

Is that true? Let's see your eyes.
Are they blue?

GYPSY WOMAN

(*Joyfully.*) Oh, how many good things I see, lady,—but I cannot distinguish clearly—without the aid of yellow rays, lady—

GIRL

Give her a gold coin, dear.

(*He gives her the coin.*)

GYPSY WOMAN

(*Placing the coin upon a card, pressing it down firmly with her thumb.*) Three little children—two boys and a girl, lady! The boys—tall and strong—see like these (*shows jacks*)— and the girl—like this—see (*shows a queen*)

GIRL

When shall we marry, does it say?

GYPSY WOMAN

It says everything, lady. Within six months. And all happiness for you, lady, and health—except when you will be old—seventy or seventy-five—your knees will hurt you a bit—not much—see—(*shows a card somewhat indented.*)

GIRL

Seventy—who cares?

GYPSY WOMAN

(*To Cavalier.*) Let me tell yours now, sir.

CAVALIER IN BLUE

Go on, Gypsy, since you know the truth.

GYPSY WOMAN

Gypsies always know the truth. They are born with a triple sight,—the Present, the Past and the Future—(*reading the cards.*) A long life, sir, and happy as a lark's. I see something here—but I cannot distinguish it clearly,—without yellow rays.

(*Cavalier gives her the gold coin,*

which Gypsy presses over a card.) I see now—it's riches—much riches—a good wife—and faithful—a little pain in the knuckles at seventy-five or eighty—nothing serious, sir—see like this king—(*she shows a card a little indented.* Then she gathers her cards, while couple leave laughing, delighted.)

CAVALIER IN BLUE

Are you satisfied, my dear?

GIRL

Yes, dear—I always believe gypsies. Three children for me, and a good wife for you,—aren't you glad?

CAVALIER IN BLUE

Certainly, dear.

GIRL

And we'll both be old—old—like this—(*She imitates the walk of an old woman.*)

(*Three men pass by, one of whom is the Cavalier in Green.*)

CAVALIER IN GREEN

There's our girl!

(*Girl looks away.*)

CAVALIER IN GREEN

(*Taps her back.*)

CAVALIER IN BLUE

Sir!

CAVALIER IN GREEN

No harm meant! We are old friends. (*To the other two men.*) You remember.

CAVALIER IN BLUE

(*Severely.*) You are insulting a lady. (*To Girl.*) Do you know this man?

GIRL

No, dear. He is impertinent.

CAVALIER IN GREEN

(*To Girl.*) You don't know me! (*To the other two men, who are laughing.*)

Just listen! (*Laughs.*)

CAVALIER IN BLUE

Apologize!

CAVALIER IN GREEN

What for?

CAVALIER IN GREEN

For having insulted a lady.

CAVALIER IN GREEN

(Laughing.) A lady!

CAVALIER IN BLUE

*(Draws his sword and stabs him.)**(There is naturally a great commotion. People surround the Cavalier in Blue. The two friends of the Cavalier in Green try to revive him.)*

VOICE

Is he dead?

VOICE

Dead! Dead! Dead!

VOICE

He pierced his heart.

VOICE

His sword went right through him.

CAVALIER IN BLUE

*(Cavalier in Blue is meanwhile taken to the police.)**(Girl weeps.)*

VOICE

*(To Girl.) You better go along. You'll be needed. (She walks off.)**(Cavalier in Green is carried away by the two friends. Commotion continues for a short while.)*

VOICE

What was the trouble?

VOICE

Jealousy, of course.

VOICE

Insult—

VOICE

Do you believe in jealousy?

VOICE

It's the only proof of love.

VOICE

Do you believe in jealousy?

GYPSY

Your fortune told! Your fortune told!

HARPIST

In the merry merry month of June—

BEGGAR WOMAN

Charity! Charity!

BALLOON-MAN

Balloons! Balloons!

FLOWER-GIRL

Roses! Roses!

(PIERROT AND COLUMBINE approach the fountain, on the opposite side of the Jester.) They are both conventional in appearance, except that the wrists of their left arms are chained together by a broad gold bracelet.)

COLUMBINE

I love you, Pierrot.

PIERROT

I love you, Columbine.

COLUMBINE

Forever, Pierrot.

PIERROT

Forever, Columbine.

COLUMBINE

Forever?

PIERROT

Forever!

(They kiss and sit down upon the rim of the fountain.)

PIERROT

(Pointing in one direction.) How beautiful it must be yonder.

COLUMBINE

(How beautiful it must be yonder.) (She has pointed in another direction.)

PIERROT

(Pointing to the direction he has indicated first.) Let us go yonder—

COLUMBINE

(Pointing in her direction.) Let us go yonder!

PIERROT

Where, Columbine?

COLUMBINE

There, Pierrot.

PIERROT

Why, Columbine?

COLUMBINE

I do not know.

PIERROT

Do you love me here?

COLUMBINE

I love you, Pierrot. Do you love me?

PIERROT

I love you, Columbine.

COLUMBINE

Then let us stay here.

PIERROT

Let us stay here.

(*They sigh.*)

PIERROT

There are men who walk alone, Columbine.

COLUMBINE

There are women who walk alone, Pierrot.

PIERROT

They do not love.

COLUMBINE

They do not love.

PIERROT

Their wrists are not chained together.

COLUMBINE

With a bracelet of gold—

PIERROT

With a beautiful bracelet of gold—

COLUMBINE

When you become rich, Pierrot, you will stud our bracelet with diamonds.

PIERROT

And sapphires, Columbine.

COLUMBINE

It will dazzle like a sun.

PIERROT

Like a heaven of stars and moons.

(*They sigh.*)

COLUMBINE

(*Pointing in the direction to which*

she pointed before.) Will you go yonder, Pierrot?

PIERROT

Why, Columbine?

COLUMBINE

It is beautiful yonder.

PIERROT

Don't you love me here, Columbine?

COLUMBINE

I love you here, Pierrot.

PIERROT

Forever?

COLUMBINE

Forever!

PIERROT

Then let us stay here.

COLUMBINE

Let us stay here.

BALLOON-MAN

Balloons! Balloons! Balloons!

PIERROT

Balloons fly high when their string is torn.

COLUMBINE

Like blue and green dreams—

PIERROT

Like moons freed from the mouths of oceans—

COLUMBINE

Like Columbines with wings—

PIERROT

Like Pierrots with arms wide outstretched—

COLUMBINE

They never return.

PIERROT

They never return.

COLUMBINE

Their hearts are light.

PIERROT

Their hearts are air.

COLUMBINE

They do not love.

PIERROT

They do not love.

COLUMBINE

But I love you, Pierrot.

PIERROT

And I love you, Columbine.

(They kiss and sigh.)

FLOWER-GIRL

Roses! Roses! Roses!

COLUMBINE

Roses cannot fly—

PIERROT

Roses cannot fly—

COLUMBINE

Because their petals are bound together—

PIERROT

With emerald bracelets.

COLUMBINE

Only when the winter comes—

PIERROT

And the bracelets are torn —

COLUMBINE

By the blue teeth of the wind—

PIERROT

Then the petals run free over the earth.

COLUMBINE

But they are old—

PIERROT

And withered—

COLUMBINE

They do not smell then—

PIERROT

They are like dust.

COLUMBINE

The feet of the people step upon them.

PIERROT

The rain beats them.

COLUMBINE

With long white whips.

PIERROT

The bracelet crumbles—

COLUMBINE

The bracelet crumbles—

PIERROT

Alas, the poor old petals of roses!

COLUMBINE

Alas!

(They sigh.)

PIERROT

Do you love me, Columbine?

COLUMBINE

I love you, Pierrot.

PIERROT

Forever?

COLUMBINE

Forever!

(They rise, and walk away.)

JESTER

They are laughing—they are laughing.

VOICE

Again!

VOICE

Who, Jester?

VOICE

How do they laugh—Hohoho—haha—hihihi—

(There is general laughter among the people who have gathered once more around the Jester.)

JESTER

They are laughing.

MAN WITH PARROT IN CAGE

My parrot can laugh too.

(To Parrot.) Laugh.Polly! *Laugh!* Hohohoh!

PARROT

Hohohoh!

VOICE

Laugh, parrot!

PARROT

Hohohoh!

(Much laughter, imitating both the Jester and the Parrot.)

JESTER

They are laughing—

VOICE

So jesters go insane like other people?

VOICE

They make believe.

JESTER

They are laughing—

VOICE

Let's tickle him. Perhaps he'll show us how they laugh.

VOICE

Come on!

VOICE

Go ahead!

(The Jester is tickled by several hands, but remains passive.)

PARROT

Hohohoh!

VOICE

Who is laughing, Jester—the parrots of the world?

(Jester raises his head for a moment, as if he had heard something that interested him. Then he lowers it again.)

VOICE

They are laughng—

VOICE

Come away, he'll get us all crazy.

VOICE

A real comedian who never laughs himself.

PARROT

Hohohoh!

(One hears "hohohoh" in the public for a little while, then it dies out.)

GYPSY WOMAN

Your fortune told!

HARPIST

In the merry merry month of June—
In the merry month of June—

BEGGAR WOMAN

Charity! Charity!

YOUNG MAN

Why charity, old woman?

BEGGAR WOMAN

Because I am poor, sir.

YOUNG MAN

Poor and old,—and you wish to live?

BEGGAR WOMAN

Charity, sir.

YOUNG MAN

Why do you wish to live?

BEGGAR WOMAN

Charity, Sir.

YOUNG MAN

I'll give you a gold coin, if you can give me a good reason why you should live, being old and poor.

BEGGAR WOMAN

Charity, good sir.

YOUNG MAN

Answer my question, and the money is yours.

BEGGAR WOMAN

Charity, sir.

YOUNG MAN

You should die, old woman!

BEGGAR WOMAN

Charity, sir.

YOUNG MAN

The only charity for you is death. Starve, old woman. *(He twists her wrist, steals the money she has in her hand, and runs away.)*

BEGGAR WOMAN

Thief! Thief! Thief!

(Several persons gather about.)

BEGGAR WOMAN

He robbed me! He stole my money!

VOICE

Who?

BEGGAR WOMAN

He's run away. *(She weeps.)*

VOICE

Do you believe her?

VOICE

Not I.

VOICE

They do this on purpose—

VOICE

How did he steal your money?

BEGGAR WOMAN

He twisted my hand, and stole it—

VOICE

A man?

BEGGAR WOMAN

Yes.

VOICE

A young man or an old man?

BEGGAR WOMAN

A young man.

VOICE

Are you sure?

BEGGAR WOMAN

He said I ought to starve.

VOICE

How tricky these women are! I remember one—

BEGGAR WOMAN

My money! My money!

(Man with parrot passes by.)

PARROT

Hohohoho!

VOICE

The parrot doesn't believe her, does he?

VOICE

Hohohoho!

(Crowd disperses.)

BEGGAR WOMAN

He said I should die—was he the devil,—the devil with the head of an owl who foretells death? I should die, he said. *(Walks over to Gypsy.)*

BEGGAR WOMAN

Tell me my fortune, gypsy.

GYPSY WOMAN

A gold coin, old woman.

GIRL

Doesn't glitter enough.

BEGGAR WOMAN

Just tell me one thing for a silver coin.

GYPSY WOMAN

Silver is too white for my eyes.

BEGGAR WOMAN

Two silver coins. Just tell me whether I am to die soon, gypsy.

GYPSY WOMAN

Search in your purse for a third silver coin.

BEGGAR WOMAN

(Turning her pocket.) I haven't another coin.

GYPSY WOMAN

(Satisfied, takes away the two silver coins.) You will live long—very long—see—two queens together—a double life—a hundred years.

BEGGAR WOMAN

(Delighted.) He was only a thief. He wasn't the devil with an owl's head. *(She walks over to the Clown in the column, places a coin in the slot, and kneels.)*

BEGGAR WOMAN

Keep me, O Lord, keep me! You who never born shall never die! Keep me, and remember that I have been robbed, and repay a hundred fold *(as though sorry for the bargain)* a thousand fold, O Lord!

(Monk appears at the opening.)

MONK

O wicked people, repent. Remember the tortures that await you for your earthly pleasures! Remember the just hands of the Lord! Come to your Lord! Repent! Repent! Repent! *(He disappears.)*

BEGGAR WOMAN

I repent, O Lord! Glory unto you, O Lord, for the good omen of the holy Monk!

(She rises and walks away.)

BEGGAR WOMAN

Charity! Charity!

BALLOON-MAN

Balloons! Balloons!

HARPIST

In the merry merry month of June—

FLOWER-GIRL

Roses! Carnations! Roses!

GYPSY WOMAN

Your fortune told!

BEGGAR WOMAN

Charity! Charity!

YOUNG MAN

(Repassing, whispering in Beggar Woman's ear.) You must die!

(He disappears in the crowd.)

BEGGAR WOMAN

(Shrieking.) Help! Help!

VOICE

What's the trouble?

BEGGAR WOMAN

Again!

VOICE

What,—robbed again!

BEGGAR WOMAN

He said I must die! I must die! *(She staggers off.)* I must die!

VOICE

The old woman has gone crazy.

VOICE

She makes believe.

VOICE

She is a tricky old thing.

FLOWER-GIRL

(To Balloon-Man.) How are you making out?

BALLOON-MAN

Terrible—and you?

FLOWER-GIRL

Almost nothing.

BALLOON-MAN

Terrible.

FLOWER-GIRL

(Pointing to Harpist.) His hat is almost full.

BALLOON-MAN

And the Gypsy is loaded with gold coins.

FLOWER-GIRL

And the old beggar woman who makes believe she is robbed is rich.

BALLOON-MAN

Only honest folk can't make a living.

FLOWER-GIRL

It's enough to drive you to almost anything.

BALLOON-MAN

My dear girl, honest folk like us starve.

BALLOON-MAN

Why?

FLOWER-GIRL

Why?

BALLOON-MAN

Yes, why?

FLOWER-GIRL

How should I know?

FLOWER-GIRL

(Insisting.) Tell me why!

BALLOON-MAN

(Looks at her perplexed.) It's so.

FLOWER-GIRL

(Almost weeping.) I want to know why honest folk must starve!

BALLOON-MAN

It has always been so. It'll always be so. *(He walks off.)*

Balloons! Balloons!

FLOWER-GIRL

Why? *(She walks over to Clown, places a coin in the slot, and kneels.)* Why, O Lord, must honest folk starve?

Why has it always been so? Why will it always be so? Why? (*Just as she turns to rise, she sees a woman disappearing with a few of her flowers. She weeps for a moment or two, then re-begins.*) Roses! Roses! Carnations!

(*Cavalier in Yellow with Girl are seen approaching the Clown, depositing several coins, and kneeling, quietly.*)

HARPIST

In the merry month of June—in the merry month of June—

BALLOON-MAN

Balloons! Balloons!

GIRL

(*Rising.*) Now let us hear our fortune told by the gypsy.

CAVALIER IN YELLOW

(*Rising.*) With you, my love, my fortune will always be smiling.

GIRL

(*Slapping him lightly over the arm.*) You do not love me—

CAVALIER IN YELLOW

I love you!

GIRL

Always?

CAVALIER IN YELLOW

Always, dearest.

(*By this time they have reached the Gypsy.*)

GIRL

Read us our fortune, Gypsy.

(*Gypsy spreads out her cards.*) ...

GYPSY

The lady loves a gentleman with brown eyes—and she is certainly loved by him.

GIRL

(*To Cavalier in Yellow.*) Let me see, dear—your eyes—brown?

GYPSY

(*Ecstatically.*) Great many good

things, lady, but my eyes can't see them except by yellow rays.

GIRL

Give her a gold coin, dear.

(*He gives the gypsy a gold coin, which she places on a card, and presses with thumb.*)

GYPSY

Two children lady—a boy and a girl—both so handsome—see—the boy like this—(*shows a jack*)—and the girl like this—(*shows a queen.*)

GIRL

When shall we marry?

GYPSY

Within six months, lady.

GIRL

Is that right, dear?

CAVALIER IN YELLOW

As you want, dearest.

GYPSY

A long, long life, lady—(*a little pathetically.*) Except that at about seventy, your knuckles will hurt a bit—just a tiny bit—(*shows a card which is a little bent.*)

GIRL

Seventy! Seventy! Who cares?

GYPSY

And now your fortune, sir.

GIRL

Yes, yes, dear. Gypsies always tell the truth.

GYPSY

(*Spreading out her cards.*) A long life, sir, a very long life and happy as a lark's—and this—oh, I can't see—a yellow light, sir—

GYPSY

Now I see—riches—riches—a good wife—two beautiful children—

(*Gypsy gathers the cards. Girl and Cavalier in Yellow walk away arm in arm.*)

HARPIST

In the merry, merry month of June—

FLOWER-GIRL

Roses! Carnations! Dahlias!

BALLOON MAN

Balloons! Balloons!

(A drum is heard beating from a distance on the right.)

VOICES

Soldiers! Soldiers! Soldiers!

*(People make room for the soldiers, who appear.)**(The soldiers are long, tin-men walking in goose-step.)*

VOICES

Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

VOICES

Long live our heroes!

VOICE

Long live the army!

VOICES

Hurrah! Hurrah!

BOY

Look, Mother, they are tin!

MOTHER

Sh! What an idea! They are heroes!

VOICE

Keep your mouth shut, young fellow!

VOICE

What a training!

BOY

But aren't they tin, mother?

MOTHER

You come home! You won't see anything more today!

(She drags the boy after her.)

BOY

(Crying and shouting at the same time.) Tin! Tin! Tin!

VOICE

Long live the army!

VOICES

Hurrah!

VOICE

That boy should be put in a reformatory!

VOICE

He should have his tongue cut out!

VOICE

What a generation!

VOICE

Immoral and unethical.

BALLOON MAN

Balloons! Balloons!

HARPIST

In the merry, merry month of June—

(The sun has sunk. Lanterns are lit. There is much laughter and noise.)

JESTER

They are laughing. They are laughing.

GYPSY

(Counting her money furtively.) It's good enough for today. They won't come any more. *(She places her purse in her pocket, and leaves.. Her purse falls out, near the blind man, who picks it up, and hides it quickly. Some moments later, the Gypsy is seen pushing people aside, looking for her money.)*

GYPSY

My money! My purse! Who took my money?

(People gather around.)

VOICES

What's the trouble? What's the matter?

GYPSY

My purse fell out of my pocket. I forgot I had a hole in it. My purse! My purse!

VOICE

You can tell who took it. Read it in the cards!

(People laugh.)

VOICE

Look around and guess.

GYPSY

(*Looking around, unable to settle her suspicion upon anyone.*) My purse! Give me back my purse!

VOICE

Maybe the blind man saw your purse, and picked up with his lost arm.

(*General laughter.*)

GYPSY

(*Continues to look for her purse.*) My purse! My money! (*When she walks over to the Clown, and kneels.*)

GYPSY

Help me find my purse, O Lord, and I shall drop a gold coin into your heart. I am a poor woman, help me! (*Weeping.*) My purse! My purse! (*She rises and walks away, still searching.*)

FLOWER-GIRL

Roses! Carnations! Roses!

JESTER

They are laughing—

(*Harpist rises, and taps his way to the Clown, places two coins in the slot and kneels.*)

HARPIST

You have not forgotten me, O Lord, who never born shall never die. Glory unto your name!

(*He rises, and walks back to his place.*)

(*Evening. The moon has appeared, timidly, like a young virgin. She will be more audacious before long, like the young virgin. The stars, too, are coming out, a handful at a time, twinkling sleepily. They, too, will dare more later. Heaven is adorning the Carnival of Man.*)

(*Pierrot and Columbine come forward. But they are not the ones we saw a while before. Perhaps they are. Time has passed,—maybe an hour, may*

be many years, who knows? Only the unimaginative believe in the clock. At any rate, they are not recognizable. Columbine is a stout lady of about 45, and he a stout gentleman of about fifty. Their necks are chained together by a long rusty iron chain.)

COLUMBINE

Forever, Pierrot

(*Pierrot does not answer.*)

COLUMBINE

You must say,—“forever, Columbine!”

PIERROT

(*Grumbling.*) Forever, Margaret!

COLUMBINE

Can't you forget for one day that I am Margaret, I am Columbine tonight.

PIERROT

(*Petulantly.*) Oh—

COLUMBINE

Look at the moon, Pierrot—a red moon like a large round heart. The waves are rising now, Pierrot, to reach the mouth of the moon. So the soul of Columbine rises to meet the soul of Pierrot. Does Pierrot bend a little to reach it?

PIERROT

(*Trying to loosen a little the chain about his neck.*) This damned chain!

COLUMBINE

We'll buy a golden one for our anniversary, Pierrot.

PIERROT

I told you a hundred times that we are going to gild this one. I am no millionaire.

COLUMBINE

I know, Pierrot. But we make believe to-night.

PIERROT

You always irritate me.

COLUMBINE

(*Not paying attention to his last remark.*) A golden chain studded with rubies that will glitter like many little moons, Pierrot—

PIERROT

To-morrow is Monday. I've lots to do in the office. Let's go home. We've been out the whole day. It's enough.

COLUMBINE

It's always Sunday, Pierrot, don't you know? Always beautiful nights with red moons and oceans that pout their soft lips to be kissed!

PIERROT

H'm, h'm. I know.

COLUMBINE

Forever?

PIERROT

What?

COLUMBINE

"Forever, forever, Columbine!"

PIERROT

(*Grumbling.*) Forever Margaret!

COLUMBINE

Can't you say, "Columbine"?

(*Pierrot does not answer. He is trying hard to loosen somewhat the chain.*)

COLUMBINE

Pierrot, will you capture those white butterflies for me?

(*Dazed, looks at Columbine.*)

What butterflies?

COLUMBINE

The stars, Pierrot. They are white butterflies to put in my hair. White butterflies dancing about the moon.

(*Pierrot shrugs his shoulders and yawns.*)

COLUMBINE

The moon is a red mouth. The stars are kisses, Pierrot.

(*Pierrot yawns long and loud.*)

COLUMBINE

Will you fly to the moon, Pierrot?

PIEROTT

I will fly home, that's what I'll do. To-morrow is Monday.

FLOWER-GIRL

Roses, Pierrot, roses!

COLUMBINE

Buy a rose, Pierrot. Roses are the hearts of gardens.

(*Pierrot shakes his head to Flower-Girl.*)

FLOWER-GIRL

Roses, Columbine, roses!

COLUMBINE

Roses are the red lips of lovers that kissed long ago.

(*Pierrot turns around. Flower-Girl screws her nose and walks away.*)

PIEROTT

You always embarrass me!

COLUMBINE

Roses are—

PIEROTT

(*Pulling at his chain.*) Come home, will you?

(*One hears the loud blowing of a trumpet.*)

(*Pierrot, meanwhile, has managed to drag Columbine after him.*)

VOICE

Look, Punch!

VOICE

Punch!

VOICE

Punch is blowing the trumpet!

(*As a matter of fact the little curtain with the figure of Punch and Judy has been drawn apart, and Punch is blowing a trumpet. When a sufficient number of people have gathered about, Punch puts his trumpet away and speaks:*)

PUNCH
Good evening, ladies and gentlemen!

VOICES
Good evening, Mr. Punch.

PUNCH
The moon and stars are out, ladies and gentlemen,—(*pathetically*), and—and they are laughing—they are laughing—

(*Great laughter in the public.*)

PARROT
Hohohoh!

PUNCH
And you, too, must laugh!
(*Applause.*)

PUNCH
Therefore am I here!

VOICE
Where is Judy?

PUNCH
She will appear later. Watch, and see if you recognize her.

VOICE
Is she good to you?
(*Laughter.*)

PUNCH
That's right, laugh, ladies and gentlemen! Nothing is half as good as laughter.

VOICES
That's right! That's true!

PUNCH
It does not matter why we laugh, does it, ladies and gentlemen, provided that somehow we manage to laugh?

VOICE
Right!

VOICE
Clever!

VOICE
I am not certain whether it's unethical—

PUNCH
Oh, how often I've tried to make you

laugh! Sorry, ladies and gentlemen, only rarely did I succeed!

VOICE
When?

VOICE
How?

PUNCH
You are a bit—sensitive—ladies and gentlemen—about our sense of humor. You haven't—what shall I call it—the universal laugh!

VOICE
When did you try to make us laugh?

VOICES
When? When?

PUNCH
(*Dodging the question*). The universal gurgle!

VOICE
Who are you?

PUNCH
I am the artist magnificent!
(*Laughter.*)

VOICE
What is your name?

PUNCH
Don't you recognize me?

VOICES
No—no—no—

PUNCH
I am—

VOICE
Who?

PUNCH
Art is suspense, ladies and gentlemen, suspense!

VOICES
Tell us who you are!

PUNCH
At the end of the performance, ladies and gentlemen.

VOICES
Now! Now!

PUNCH

At the very end!

VOICE

His accent is peculiar.

VOICE

Do you recognize him?

VOICE

No.

PUNCH

And now, ladies and gentlemen with your permission, I shall present to you, what I consider my masterpiece—"The Dance Ultimate!"

VOICES

The Dance Ultimate! The Dance Ultimate!

PUNCH

Prepare your throats, ladies and gentlemen,—for the Universal gurgle! *(He disappears.)*

VOICE

Clever!

VOICE

Who might he be?

VOICE

No one in particular.

VOICE

(Laughing.) The artist magnificent.

HARPIST

In the merry, merry month of June—

FLOWER-GIRL

Roses! Roses!

BALLOON MAN

Balloons! Balloons!

(A little mannikin appears upon the stage.)

FIRST MANNIKIN

I am Truth! I utter what I see. My right eye is covered by a thick cataract; my left eye is out.

(Laughter.)

VOICE

Clever.

VOICE

Deep.

VOICE

Hohohoh!

PARROT

Hohohoho!

(Truth walks to the edge of the stage. Second Mannikin appears.)

SECOND MANNIKIN

I am Falsehood! I say what is not! I try to invent. I cannot. I borrow the words of Truth.

VOICE

What does it mean?

VOICE

Deep!

VOICE

Falsehoods sound like truth.

(Second Mannikin places himself next to first, and the rest will follow suit.)

THIRD MANNIKIN

I am Virtue! My dreams are vice.

VOICE

Hear! Hear!

VOICE

Deep!

PARROT

Hohohoh!

VOICE

The universal gurgle.

(General laughter.)

FOURTH MANNIKIN

I am Vice! My dreams are virtue.

VOICE

How?

VOICE

Deep!

VOICE

Who says "deep" every time?

VOICE

Clever—maybe.

FIFTH MANNIKIN

I am Beauty! He who sees my feet,
dies!

VOICE

Let's see his feet!

VOICE

They are covered!

VOICE

He's afraid we'll die.

VOICE

Deep!

SIXTH MANNIKIN

I am Ugliness! He who loves me
loves Beauty!

VOICE

What!

VOICE

Crazy!

VOICE

Deep!

VOICE

Very!

SEVENTH MANNIKIN

I am Time! I am that which never
is!

VOICE

Good!

VOICE

Deep!

PARROT

Hohohoh!

EIGHTH MANNIKIN

I am Eternity! I am the two ends
of a second that Time hurls into the
Great Abyss!

VOICE

Hear! Hear!

VOICE

What in the world does he mean?

VOICE

Deep!

VOICE

Deeper—deepest!

VOICE

A teacher among us.

NINTH MANNIKIN

I am Fame! I am a carved stone for
the rain to scratch upon and the birds
to empty their bowels!

VOICE

This is good!

VOICE

For the birds to empty themselves—

VOICE

At last I understand.

VOICE

Deep!

TENTH MANNIKIN

I am Forgetfulness! My roots are
underneath the feet of glory!

VOICE

Deep!

VOICE

He annoys me with his eternal
“deep.”

VOICE

Punch is making fun of us. I can't
stand mockers!

ELEVENTH MANNIKIN

I am Love! I am the Destroyer!

VOICE

What!

VOICE

Crazy!

VOICE

Deep!

TWELFTH MANNIKIN

I am Hate! I am the Builder!

VOICE

I suspected it.

VOICE

Deep!

VOICE

Hate—the Builder—what a notion!
(The twelve mannikins now begin to
dance in a circle.)

VOICE

This is clever!

VOICE

Deep!

VOICE

Nuisance!

(After several turns the mannikins stop, and another Mannikin appears in the center of the stage,—not really a mannikin, but a person with a mask, representing Death. A conventional mask, except that a rose is stuck between his teeth. In his right hand, as usual, he holds a sharp scythe.)

MANNIKIN

I am I! My names are many, but I am I—nameless! I am I and I dance my usual dance! (*Mannikin dances the dance macabre, and with his scythe he chops off the heads of the other mannikins. When they are all down, he tramples upon them.*) I am I! I am the many-named one—the nameless One!

VOICE

Too morbid.

VOICE

Is it really ethical?

VOICE

Less ethical than moral, I should say.

VOICE

Deep!

VOICE

It's simply death.

VOICE

I am I!

(Laughter.)

MANNIKIN

I am the Magician! I am the Changer of things! (*He waves his hands, and out of the "corpse" of a mannikin, a tree rises; out of another head a flower*

dangles; out of a third a snake wriggles). I am I! The nameless one with many names!

VOICE

Clever!

VOICE

Splendid!

MANNIKIN

I am the maker of cold moons! Out of the heart of fire I take water! Out of the heart of water I take fire! (*He changes a jet of water into a long flame, and vice-versa.*) I am I! (*He suddenly takes his mask off and Punch is seen again.*)

VOICE

Look! Look!

VOICE

Fine!

VOICE

And who are you, Punch?

VOICE

You promised you would tell us!

VOICE

Take your mask off!

PUNCH

Do you not recognize me, ladies and gentlemen?

VOICE

No! No! No!

Is there another artist as audacious as I? Could any one else conceive the Dance Ultimate?

(Laughter.)

PUNCH

I am the wearer of masks!

VOICE

We know that.

VOICE

Show us who is behind the mask!

PUNCH

No one.

(Laughter.)

PUNCH

I am I—I am the nameless one!

(Laughter.)

PUNCH

I am the many-named one!

(Laughter.)

VOICE

Come on, your mask off!

VOICE

It's about time!

(Punch does not answer. He remains perfectly motionless. His cloak drops. Then his mask falls. The spectators are astounded to see the "Clown," their God.)

VOICES

Oh! Oh! Oh!

VOICE

Who dares?

VOICE

(They all look at the column, and see the "Clown" still there. The Gypsy and the Beggar Woman are kneeling before it.)

VOICE

That's blasphemy!

VOICE

That's too much.

VOICE

Take it down, Punch!

VOICE

It is he!

VOICE

It is our Lord! *(He climbs upon the platform, puts a coin in the slot, and prays.)* Oh Lord, who never born shall never die!

VOICE

Get off there!

VOICE

Get away!

VOICE

Treason!

VOICE

He is God! I saw Him in a vision!

HARPIST

In the merry, merry month of June—
In the merry month of June—

VOICE

Throw him off!

VOICE

Don't you dare.

VOICE

It's the Lord.

VOICE

There can't be two!

VOICE

This one is the true one!

VOICE

Lie!

VOICE

Blasphemy!

VOICE

True!

(Some dash to the platform to destroy the "Clown," others stop them.)

VOICE

Be careful there!

VOICE

He'll strike us dead!

VOICE

Don't touch!

VOICE

Break it!

HARPIST

In the merry, merry month of June—

MONK

(Appearing at the opening of the column.) Repent, o wicked people!

(People remain stock-still, considering the appearance of the monk as something very significant.)

MONK

Repent, chasers after vain pleasures! His hands are a perfect balance and his justice implacable!

HARPIST

In the merry, merry month of June—
(Several people kneel facing the column; some facing the new Clown.)

VOICE

Turn your face the right way!

VOICE

Turn yours!

VOICE

Don't interfere with a man's God!

VOICE

It's not God! It's a clown!

VOICE

Your's is!

VOICE

Heathen!

(A scuffle takes place between a few persons.)

MONK

Wide are the streams of his flames,
 and long the streams of his molten
 lead, o hunters of shadows! Repent!
 Repent! *(He disappears.)*

BEGGAR-WOMAN

I repent—

GYPSY

I repent.

VOICES

I repent!

BEGGAR-WOMAN

Keep me alive!

GYPSY

Give me back my purse!

HARPIST

In the merry, merry month of June—
(To the people it must seem that heavy clouds have gathered, like mighty fists; that the moon has vanished; that the stars frightened have flown away; that soon there will be tumultuous thundering and long white spears of lightning which will pierce all hearts. As a matter of fact, however, the sky is a soft

blue; the moon was never more ravishing; the stars never so playful.)

JESTER

They are laughing—they are laughing—they are laughing. *(His voice becomes more and more strident, more and more desperate. He rises and faces the people.)* They are laughing—they are laughing—They are thundering with laughter! *(The people stunned, look at the Jester.)*

HARPIST

In the merry, merry month of June—

JESTER

He is drunk, their Jester, and he dreams. We are his dream—the dream of the drunken Jester of the gods that always laugh. You are not. You do not exist. Nothing exists. Nothing! Save the drunken Jester and the laughing gods. Do you understand? Shadows, echoes, dancing, shouting in the head of the drunken jester!

VOICE

He's crazy!

VOICE

He is drunk himself.

VOICE

What gods?

VOICE

There is but one God, heathen!

VOICE

Vulgar blasphemer!

VOICE

Kill him!

JESTER

They are laughing—laughing with a thunderous laugh! They made him drink that he might dream. And he dreams us—us—shadows of the fumes of wine! They are laughing! Laughing! Your million years are the hour the jester dreams you in his drunken dream! The hour the gods laugh!

VOICE

Kill him.

VOICE

Is he crazy?

VOICE

We are nothing, eh?

VOICE

How is it that we don't hear them
laugh, Jester?

VOICE

Go to sleep fool, and dream your own
dreams!

VOICE

We are eternal!

VOICE

Certainly.

VOICE

At least our souls—

VOICE

Immortal—

VOICE

Souls and bodies!

VOICE

It's self-evident.

VOICE

It can be proved mathematically.

JESTER

You are nothing—neither bodies nor
souls! You are his dream!

VOICE

We resurrect.

VOICE

We are the image of our Lord.

VOICE

We live forever, crazy jester.

VOICE

Our death is but a greater birth.

VOICE

How can you deny matter?

VOICE

The soul is even more certain.

VOICE

We are divine!

JESTER

They are laughing—they are laugh-
ing—a long, loud laugh out of their
great mouths! They are laughing to
see us live in the head of the drunken
Jester. They are laughing at the white
shadows created by the gray fumes of
wine.

VOICE

Kill him!

VOICE

Go home, crazy fool!

VOICE

He's drunk, of course.

VOICE

Don't you see it in his eyes—red from
drink.

VOICE

So this is what he meant by "they
are laughing"?

VOICE

An immoral and unethical genera-
tion.

VOICE

I haven't quite grasped the differ-
ence between moral and ethical. You
promised you would explain to me.

VOICE

Ethical, you see—

JESTER

They are laughing—but I have cap-
tured the gurgle of their long laugh-
ter. I have captured it, and I shall de-
liver you with it! Deliver you, white
shadows wriggling in the head of the
drunken jester. (*He takes out of his
pocket something that resembles a
bomb.*)

VOICE

What has he got in his hands?

VOICE

Be careful, Jester!

VOICE

Put that away!

VOICE

Kill him!

VOICE

Don't be afraid.

VOICE

He's simply drunk.

VOICE

That's a rubber ball.

(Hysterical laughter.)

PARROT

Hohohohoh!

VOICE

Listen to the parrot!

HARPIST

In the merry, merry month of June—

JESTER

I shall laugh with them! We shall
all laugh! Hohohohohoh!

PARROT

Hohohohoh!

VOICE

He's crazy!

VOICE

He should be locked up!

VOICE

Don't touch him now.

VOICE

He seems furious!

VOICE

Let him calm down a bit.

VOICE

And moral means—

JESTER

Laugh! Laugh! *(He throws the bomb against the fountain on which he was sitting. A great red flame bursts out of it, and in a moment embraces the entire scene.)*

VOICES

Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh!

VOICE

Help!

VOICE

Kill him!

VOICE

Crazy Jester!

VOICE

Kill him! Kill him!

HARPIST

In the merry, merry month of June—
oh! oh! O Lord, here's the gypsy's money. *(Frantically.)* I found the purse, I! Mercy! *(Not knowing what is going on, but feeling burnt.)* I took it! I took it!

VOICES

Oh! Oh! Oh!

MONK

O Lord, your Judgment has come!
Too late, wicked chasers after earthly pleasures! That my reward be greater, O Lord, I am jumping into your blessed flames! Remember it, O Lord! *(He jumps.)*

BEGGAR-WOMAN

Let me live, O Lord!

GYPSY

Give me my purse, you thief!

(She makes one or two steps toward the Harpist, but vanishes in the flames)

(Jester continues to laugh. Voices die out. One hears a few indistinct groans. The flames cover everything. Jester's laugh becomes vaguer and vaguer. The stars continue to shine; the moon, untroubled, looks on. The Jester's laugh is an echo that has traveled far—far—)

THE CURTAIN DROPS.

LAST SCENE.

No time at all has elapsed between the Carnival and this scene. The Curtain rises. The Carnival has left no trace whatever. The Hand of the Jester of the Gods splashes in the well. The splashing, being, of course, simultaneous with the throwing of the bomb

of the Jester in the carnival. For a moment it seems as if the Jester of the gods would wake up, but he only chases the mosquitoes which doubtless suggested the dream, and laughs—"Hohohohoh!" like the parrot in the carnival. Then he turns and begins to snore again, dreaming other dreams....

The gods laugh on.....

The moon is so near, it seems to be lying upon the ground like a great white sheet; the stars hide among the leaves of the trees and several lie as a halo about the face of the Jester....

The gods laugh on....

AND THUS FINISHES THE DIVINE
COMEDY.

A Ballad of The Queen's Maying

By LELAND DAVIS

All this befell in the merry month of May,
And Guenever would on a-Maying go,
When sap springeth, in woman as greenwood,
And cuckoo singeth to goodman O!

In woods and meadows beside Westminster,
Betimes in the morning, out they were!
Bedashed with dew-washed herbs and flowers,
I wot a blythe company rode with her!

Now is it the wind in arras murmuring?
What's chuckling, shuffling, whispering so?
The guards in the corridor gossip with the Queen's maids!
And cuckoo singeth to goodman O!

For night was fallen, and the Queen was a-Maying,
And cuckold Arthur, in the King's double bed,
Was sprouting, perdy, the Queen's late planting,
Two little horns on the good King's head!

And sap springeth, and cuckoo singeth!
And a-Maying all night did the jolly Queen go!
When sap springeth, in woman as greenwood,
And cuckoo singeth to good man O!

Dark Magic

By MARJORIE ALLEN SEIFFERT

It is a foolish thing you ask, I said,
This solemn ritual of earth with earth,
How shall it profit us, whose hearts are wed
In this clear ecstasy of delicate mirth.

This spirit wind by which our hearts are shaken
And merged like flame? How pagan is your pride
Crying: "Now let our bodies' pledge be taken!"
I said, You ask a foolish thing! . . . I lied.

For joy speeds lightly by, and we can keep
Only her finger prints that fade and are gone,
And there is nothing left for us to weep
Or curse, or bless, or break our hearts upon.

Only one seal, immutable and tragic,
Can mark us ineffaceably with dark magic.

A Sonnet for Kate Pennifether

By MARJORIE MEEKER

Her eyes are gray and hard as polished metal,
Set in a face precise and sad and small.
She has the whiteness of a Springtime petal;
Of flower-like attributes, this one is all.
She is not frail or strange; she is unbending
As a steel rod, and stoic as a stone
Before catastrophes that come unending,
And leave her drab and silent and alone.

Since she is neither pitiful nor wise,
(Trouble may blunt and make perception stale)
One finds it well to look away from eyes
That ask no questions, tell no wistful tale,
But gleam like steel-cold portals, locked and barred
Against all things, where all that come are hard.

The Poetry of Dorothy Wordsworth

TO what extent Wordsworth drew on his sister's journals for much of his most striking imagery is probably an insoluble question, and certainly an immaterial one. It is amusingly conceivable that Wordsworth and Coleridge, coming in from their walks around Grasmere, were accustomed to dive excitedly into Dorothy's diary, exclaiming, "Look here, there's a poem in that!" Or it may be that the similarity of concept and language between parts of Dorothy's journals and many of William's poems was due to their intimacy of life and thought and the habit of discussing together their common impressions before either attempted to record them.

Whatever may be the truth of these matters, Dorothy Wordsworth crowded her journals with beautiful and exact imagery, and her treatment, even of the same impression, is so different from that of her brother that her work deserves, as it has in the past received, independent recognition. Where he was too often guilty of "vague generalities—magnificent and sonorous," she never failed to compose in language that was "flat and final, like the showdown in poker." The biographical material of her journals is largely preserved in the various Lives of her brother. But since the journals themselves have, perhaps deservedly in the main, been relegated to the academic museum of books out of print, it seems that some attempt should

be made to preserve independently the flashes of great beauty that adorn the work, flashes that should live as unconscious contributions to modern imagist poetry, modern in the sense that the exact word is never sacrificed to metre or rhyme.

If Dorothy Wordsworth, in the copious images which she composed with unmistakable care and poetic feeling, intended merely to furnish her "beloved" with material for his more respected poems, her work fits admirably into a certain conservative definition of *vers libre*, namely, "notes for poetry". But her best passages, falling invariably into natural strophes, seem to comply with the sterner standards set up by the imagist manifesto itself. She uses the language of common speech and the exact word. She creates her own rhythms, writing, perhaps unconsciously, in natural cadences, the length or brevity of the swing usually adapted admirably to the particular image. Her subjects cover almost everything that touched her experience, though, like her brother, she achieves her greatest beauty in natural description. Her work is clearly imagistic rather than cosmic, the occasional generalities found in the diary being fortunately dissociated from any of the imagistic writing. The choice of hard and clear words and the concentration of atmosphere into a few phrases are her consummate achievements. Outside of the frequent monotony of her

cadences, an unconscious fault which she naturally made no attempt to avoid, her work should stand as a very excellent example of imagistic writing.

The following poems are quoted from the journals without material change. In many instances the first person singular and the present tense have been substituted for the first person plural and the past tense. Sometimes it has seemed necessary to fill out or abbreviate a cadence, but wherever words are supplied they are articles, conjunctions or pronouns, or, if descriptive words, they are borrowed from a neighboring prosaic description of the same scene. There are occasional inversions of the cadenced phrases, as where some descriptive expression, more appropriate to the early part of the poem, was added as an afterthought. These alterations are exceedingly rare, and to point them out in detail would prolong unjustifiably these prefatory remarks. The images are presented exactly as Dorothy Wordsworth wrote them, and the only noticeable editing has been the selection of passages, the division into verses, and the arrangement of the poems. No attempt is made either to include or to eliminate passages suggesting William Wordsworth's poems, except in the few cases where Dorothy's work, however creditable, would suffer by the comparison. Such passages are omitted, as more appropriate to a discussion of the internal evidence of William's plagiarism.

Since the imposition of titles would seem an unjustifiable *tour de force*, the poems are merely divided into groups, according to the subjects treated.

WINTER

Alfoxden, March 7, 1798.

Against a cloudy sky
One only leaf
On the top of a tree—
The sole remaining leaf—
Danced round and round,
Like a rag blown in the wind.

Alfoxden, March 18, 1798.

Sheltered under the hollies
During a hailshower,
I see the withered leaves
Dance with the hailstones.

Alfoxden, February 18, 1798.

Evening,
Sharp and cold.
The crescent moon
A silvery line,
A thready bow,
Attended by Jupiter and Venus
In their palest hues.
The black sea
Made a loud noise as we came through
the wood,
Loud as if disturbed—
And the wind was silent.

Alfoxden, January 21-22, 1798.

Oaks on the bare hilltops,
Fanned by the sea breeze,
Thick with feathery sea-green moss,
As a grove not stripped of its leaves.
Ivy twisting around the oaks
Like bristled serpents
Proffering moss cups,
More proper than acorns
For fairy goblets.

Alfoxden, February 17, 1798.

The sun shone clear in the wood,
Enchanted with snow.
Holly branches,
Pendent with their white burden,
Still showing their berries
Bright red,
And their glossy green leaves.
The bare branches of the oaks
Thickened by the snow.
Deep stillness,
Disturbed
By the occasional dropping
Of snow from the holly boughs.
No other sound
But that of water,
And the slender notes of the redbreast
Singing at intervals
On the outskirts of the wood.

SPRING

The green paths down the hillsides
 Are channels for streams.
 The young wheat
 Is streaked with silver
 Lines of water
 Running between the ridges.
 On the slopes
 The sheep are gathered together.

Alfoxden, February 4, 1798.

Morning—warm and sunny.
 Young lasses seen on the hilltops
 And in the villages,
 In their summer holiday clothes—
 Pink petticoats, and blue.
 Mothers, with their children in arms,
 And the little ones,
 That just could walk,
 Tottering by their sides.
 Midges spinning in the sunshine.
 The songs of the lark and redbreast.
 Daisies on the turf.
 The hazels in blossom.
 Honeysuckles budding.
 One solitary strawberry flower
 Under a hedge.

AUTUMN

Grasmere, August 29, 1800.

Swallows gathering together.
 No light in the clouds;
 And on the gloomy lake
 A yellow reflection,
 As of cornfields.

Grasmere, October 30, 1802.

It is a breathless, grey day
 That leaves the golden woods of Autumn
 Quiet in their own tranquility,
 Stately
 And beautiful in their decaying.

WIND

As I went along the lane
 I heard the wind everywhere about me,
 But the walls sheltered me.
 I saw my favorite birch tree
 Yielding to the gusty wind
 With all its tender twigs.
 The sun shone upon it
 Glancing in the wind
 Like a flying, sunshiny shower,
 A spirit of water.
 The sun went in,
 And the tree was purple.

Alfoxden, February 1, 1798.

The rising wind
 Drove us from the road
 To seek shelter in the wood.

Suddenly a heavy blackness
 Hung over the sea:
 The naked trees roared,
 And the ground seemed in motion
 With multitudes of dancing leaves,
 Rustling.
 The full moon
 Rose in majesty
 Over the sea,
 Slowly ascending through the clouds.

Alfoxden, April 2, 1798.

The half of the wood
 Perfectly still
 While the wind
 Was making a loud noise behind us.
 The quiet trees
 Only gently bowed their heads
 As if listening to the wind.
 The hollies in the thick wood
 Unmoved by the blast,
 Shaken only by rain drops
 Falling
 From the bare oaks above.

WATERS

Grasmere, April 29, 1802.

Waters—
 The sound of waters in the air—
 The voice in the air.

Grasmere, December 9, 1801.

A company of rivers
 Came hurrying down the vale, this way
 and that,
 The great waterfall at the head,
 And lesser waterfalls in different parts
 of the mountains,
 Coming down to the streams and islands.
 The river came galloping past the church
 As fast as it could come,
 And in the village the broad stream
 Was a churn of snow at the little foot-
 bridge.

Grasmere, June 2, 1800.

I sat a long time
 Watching the hurrying waves,
 Hearing
 The regularly
 Irregular
 Sound of the waters.
 The waves about the little island
 Were a dance of spirits
 That rose out of the water
 Round its small circumference of shore.

Grasmere, January 31, 1802.

Some of the breezes
 Come from the bottom of the lake
 And spread in a circle,
 Brushing along the surface
 And growing thinner

And of a paler colour,
Till they die away;
Others spread out like a peacock's tail;
And some
Go this way and that in all directions.
The lake is all alive.

Grasmere, July 20, 1802.

On calm, hot nights
Little boats row out of the harbor
With wings of fire,
And passing sailboats
Cut fiery tracks
That close behind them
With a hundred thousand sparkles
And streams of glow-worm light.

Alfoxden, February 27, 1798.

Coleridge returned with me
As far as the wood.
A bright moonlight night.
The sea big and white,
Swelled to the shores,
But round and high in the middle.
Venus,
Almost another moon.
She is lost to us at Alfoxden,
Long before she goes down the long white
sea.

Alfoxden, February 26, 1798.

The uniform ocean
Pale greyish blue,
Only one distant bay
Bright and blue as a sky.
A vessel sailing up the bay—
A perfect image of delight.

MOONLIGHT

Alfoxden, February 26, 1798.

As we walked
We had seen the moon on the tops
of the hills, melting into
the blue sky.
The twilight still overpowered
her light; but we knew she
was shining bright above
our heads
By our faint shadows,
Going before us.

Alfoxden, January 23-24, 1798.

Sunset:
The sea a gloomy red,
Fading to sober grey,
Streaked by the deeper grey clouds.
Moonrise,
Cold and clear.
The rumble of surf
Heard on the tops of the hills.
Villages
Marked by beds of smoke.

The half dead sound
Of the near sheep bell
In the hollow of the sloping coombe.

Alfoxden, January 25, 1798.

The sky spread over
With one continuous cloud,
Whitened by the light of the moon.
At once the clouds were cloven asunder
And left her
In the center of a black-blue vault,
Sailing along,
Followed by multitudes of stars,
Small,
And bright,
And sharp.

Grasmere, March 16, 1802.

The moon is far distant in the sky,
High above the mountains.
Two stars are beside her,
Twinkling in and out,
Like butterflies
In motion and lightness.

Grasmere, October 31, 1801.

Clear night.
Hills.
Stars.
And the white waters,
Where the moon shines
Like herrings on the lake.

Grasmere, November 24, 1801.

Moonlight and rain.
A sudden rushing of winds,
Bringing earth,
And sky,
And lake together,
As if the whole
Were going to enclose me.

Alfoxden, March 21, 1798.

As the horned moon set
I startled two night birds
From the great elm tree.

RAIN

Grasmere, February 1, 1802.

There is a purplish light
On the neighboring house.
Across the vale
A stormy mist,
Strange reddish purple,
Comes down the mountain,
Bringing rain.

Grasmere, March 12, 1802.

The sun shone while it rained.
The stones of the walls
And the pebbles on the road
Glittered like silver.

MIST

Alfoxden, March 1, 1798.

In the early morning
 The shapes of the mist
 Move slowly across the pastures,
 More alive than the sheep;
 And behind the shifting curtains
 Unseen birds are singing.

BIRDS

Grasmere, May 16, 1800.

Restless voices
 Skimming the water,
 Their shadows under them,
 And returning
 To the stones on the shore,
 Chirping with the same unwearied voice.

Grasmere, June 16, 1802.

The swallows twitter
 And make a rustle
 And a little cheerful song,
 Hanging against the panes
 With their soft, white bellies
 Close to the glass
 And their forked, fish-like tails.
 They swim round and round,
 And again they come.

Grasmere, July 27, 1800.

Floating on the still lake,
 I saw a raven,
 Very high.
 It called out,
 And the dome of the sky
 Seemed to echo the sound.
 It called again
 And again,
 Flying onward;
 And the clear bell
 In the center of the mountains
 Gave back the sound,

Answering in music
 The hoarse voice of the raven.
 I heard the call
 And the echo
 After I saw the bird no longer.

Grasmere, May 1, 1802.

Two ravens flew high
 And the sun shone
 On their bellies and wings
 Long after he wæs set
 And none of his light
 Was seen on the world.

CALAIS

Grasmere, July 20, 1802.

Purple waves in the twilight,
 Brighter than precious stones,
 Forever melting on the sands.
 Far off in the west
 The coast of England
 Like a cloud,
 Crested with Dover Castle.
 The evening star,
 And the glory of the sky.

As the evening star sank
 And the colours of the west faded,
 There came in view
 Two lights of England,
 Lighted by Englishmen.

AT HOME

Grasmere, March 23, 1802.

It is a quiet night;
 The fire flickers,
 And the watch ticks.
 I hear nothing
 Save the breathing of my beloved
 As he pushes his book forward
 Now and then,
 And turns over a leaf.

Song

By GLENN WARD DRESBACH

Who dreams, and feels too soon
 That the dream is vain
 Because he grasped no silver of the moon
 Or could not once retain
 The dropped jewels of the rain,
 May wonder how some dreamer stands
 Watching, where the last hope lingers,
 Moon-silver melting in his hands
 And rain-jewels trickling through his fingers.

Twilight Excursion

By DONALD DAVIDSON

Twilight warm as a woman's flesh
Touched his hand on the littered desk.
He looked, and streets were a purple mesh,
And steeples slipped into arabesque.

A window, alive in the firmament,
Reproached his chamber of the dead.
The penitential doors revolved
Shutting the horrors—and he fled.

The fragmentary sight of men
Could see no brave limbs gladly fleeting,
Nor guess the forest in his brain,
Nor hear a fevered drum's long beating.

Yet this flashed into him, out of the wood,—
A satyr, stamping a cloven hoof,
White forms, stainless against the green,
Bare throats, under the leaves' mad roof.

And here, a dark vine scented the stair.
What was he groping for there in the dusk?
Not a bell,—but a bush for the hand to cleave.
Not a door,—but a slough of the garment's husk.

The lordly buildings drooped to grotesque.
There was stench in the pits of livelihood.
But the summoning drum in the wood kept beating
As she came, with lips of flesh and blood.

Then a table's white and silver kept
The passion of a renegade,
Considering, to a muted drum,
The tainted posturings of a maid.

The Courtesan

By KATHLEEN COTTER GROSS

Strangely her body hides itself
Within a straight, white gown;
Her wandering finger-tips are furled,
Her purple eyelids down.

Cold are her breasts where once, rose-crowned,
Lived warm, voluptuous laughter;
And still the restless, roving feet
That tread strange music after.

She knows the silence of the earth
Who loved the city's ways;
And it is ever night to her
Whose nights were ever days.

To A Fly

By LOUIS GILMORE

O importunate
O fly
You too
Shall appear in my verses

The amber
Of the mausoleum
Is the measure
Of its condescension

Chou Chang Advises Practicality To A Poet

By PAUL ELDRIDGE

The stars are radiant queens
Walking majestically across Infinity,—
But the edges of their long blue cloaks
Trail in the muddy pools of the Earth.

Reviews

ROOTABAGA STORIES

BY CARL SANDBURG.

(Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1922)

THE affinities of Carl Sandburg the story-teller are with Andersen rather than Grimm, with Harris rather than Lewis Carroll. That the stories have an absolutely individual flavor, something of that peculiar mixture of harshness and tenderness which we know as Carl Sandburg, goes without saying. We can even imagine their becoming responsible for a new literary genre—for here are fairy tales with strictly proletarian fairies; never a fairy godmother nor a stray prince nor even a disguise of any kind. Among the numerous protagonists are the Potato Faced Blind Man and the Cistern Cleaner and the Rusty Rats, together with the other less spectacular members of the animal kingdom, except for the birds! As regards these latter the poet lets himself loose as to gorgeousness of plumage and of nomenclature. And there are many adorable, dirty children and a few clean ones, engaged in such varied and pleasureable occupations as making crooked hats for snowmen, and walking through spilled molasses, and chubbing their chubs—this last being one of the several fascinating phrases to be added forthwith to the reader's vocabulary.

The first story in the book is all poetry opening a door out of the Land Where Everything Is the Same as it Always Was. In defiance of the little

sniffer who declares that even in the moon we should find things the same as they always were, the story-teller bustles us off on Zigzag Railway and at once teases us with a glimpse of the Balloon-pickers on stilts picking balloons. And that is only the beginning.

The stories vary greatly in mood. "How to Tell the Corn Fairies when You See Them," is purely lyrical. "Sand Flat Shadows" has a touch of the eerie. The story of the two skyscrapers and their too-energetic child, while beautiful, seems to me to be unnecessarily harrowing for the childish imagination. If one reads far enough into the book, he will come across the most delicious of all stupid policemen, and a conductor who quite naturally objects when the flongboos take the roof off the car.

"I must have an explanation," he told them.

"It was between us and the stars," they told him.

The illustrations are profuse and admirable, with the same realism just a trifle askew, the same mixture of the grotesque and the lyrical, which characterizes the tales. The child who does not have a chance to acquaint himself with the folk of the Village of Liver-and-Onions, not to mention those idealists who set off in a blizzard to found the Village of Cream-Puffs, is going to be as badly cheated as the little Victorian who didn't find "Alice in Wonderland" in his Christmas stocking.

MUNA LEE.

THE SECOND EMPIRE

BY PHILIP GUEDALLA.

(Constable, London, 1922)

IN his subtle and brilliant and scholarly study of Napoleon III Mr. Guedalla justifies the faith and the expectations of his admirers. Mr. Strachey must look to his laurels, for his formidable rival wins from him at all points except, perhaps, in the use of that sardonic undertone which Mr. Strachey has made so peculiarly his own. Queen Victoria—or, more accurately, Mr. Strachey's deft and most diverting portrait of Her Majesty is a thing of beauty and a joy forever, but for depth and power it is in no way comparable to this portrait of Napoleon III; even in his marshalling and presentation of facts, Mr. Guedalla's handling is superior. And though he has read through an entire library in his search for historical accuracy his facts never seem to come to him at second hand. He writes with a curiously intimate and authoritative knowledge—as though he himself had lived through the whole “gas-lit tragedy of the Second Empire” and had known more truly than is possible in real life the originals of his masterly portraits. One is left with a very vivid and convincing memory of this hectic period.

The Second Empire is more than ironic biography: It is social history of the most comprehensive kind. With a lucid and — apparently — effortless clarity Mr. Guedalla untangles the maddening snarls of the Bonapartes' family relationships and threads his way through the dishearteningly intricate maze of French political history during that strange and rather raffish period.

But, most emphatically, he does not approach his subject from the angle of the *chronique scandaleuse*. His wit is merciless and devastating, but his sense of values remains undistorted.

His estimate of Napoleon III is interesting. He sees him not as a figure of fun—a burlesque conspirator; a rococo equilibrist; a crafty, dangerous, designing sphinx—but rather as a human, all too human, man with ideals in advance of his time and, as it were, a bee in his bonnet. He has an excellent opinion of him, believing him quite strong enough to bear the blame for the collapse of the Empire—which he removes from the white, sloping shoulders of Eugenie where so many more hasty and less thorough and impartial historians have been in the habit of placing it.

The book opens with a really superb essay on Napoleon I and the origin and growth of Bonapartism.

Then we meet the future Napoleon III as a child; as a youth—“In the years between 1820 and 1830, when the whole western sky of Europe was alight with the afterglow of Byron and the young lions of French Romanticism were beginning to roar in Paris, the young Louis Bonaparte was a mild-eyed German schoolboy, learning to seek philosophy in a sunset and romance in a ruined castle.” And we watch him make his abortive attempts to repeat the return from Elba—at which the whole world rocked with mirth and Louis became a godsend to cartoonists—and yet retain his innate dignity and unshaken faith in the beckoning star that shone above the Tuileries.

Just before the coup d'état we share his progress through France as he opens railways and unveils statues. “The

cheers, the flowers, the speeches went on in the summer weather of 1850. Alsace and Lorraine ran shouting by his carriage; at Metz the King of Prussia sent his respects, and on the bare hill of Gravelotte (the war and the Prussian guns were twenty years away) they had made a little triumphal arch."

Later, during the heyday of that odd Empire, we mingle with the crowds going by "in the Champs Elysees to see the Exhibition....but it was all a shade more modish, a thought less improving, than the gleaming monument of good intentions with which Prince Albert had obliterated Hyde Park four years before. It was a rustling age of millinery and dance music.... and the town was beginning to sway to that measure which swung and quickened and rose until the Second Empire danced to an air of Offenbach out of the gaslight into the cruel sunshine of 1870."

Mr. Guedalla has an intriguing way of allowing us little stolen peeps into the future that heighten the significance and effectiveness of the scene he is describing, and of introducing casually some irrelevant detail—for instance, Mr. Clough's sojourn in Rome—that emphasizes in a startling manner the reality of that preposterously unreal time. And to make his array of portraits seem indubitably authentic he brings in those characters of fiction who are so much more alive for us than their flesh and blood contemporaries—as in speaking of Morny who was "an adroit person, something in the taste of one of Balzac's heroes: he would have known the Nucingens and married well."

The first great tragedy of the Em-

pire was the appalling end of the Mexican adventure. Maximilian was dead; Charlotte was mad; Morny was dead; Jecker dragged on until the Commune shot him; the French lay dead in their graves; and to Napoleon the sudden fall of an Empire in Mexico must have come with the vague menace of lightning below the horizon."

And here is a dramatic passage, a prelude to the Downfall, in which fact and fiction are combined: "They were cheering on the streets of Berlin; and while Paris roared '*A Berlin!*' in the fading light, Nana was dying in her room on the boulevard, and in a garden at Blackheath Mr. Morley was telling the news to Mr. John Stuart Mill. The war had come." And with the war the rather ghastly pictures—"a queer, pitiable ending to the long tale of Bonapartes in the field—of a sick, bewildered, cruelly suffering Emperor trailing patiently after his beaten armies... his ragged hair was long and almost white. They made little meals for him but he would not eat; and at night someone outside his door heard him crying out in pain...."

The tragedy of Napoleon III was that "on attaining his purpose he had lost it. It was the tragedy of an arriviste who arrived."

Among the inimitable, slyly cynical portraits with which the book is enriched are some that will cause the most irreverent laughter—unless, of course, one is such a narrow lover of the originals that one prefers to know them only through the cold perfection of an official biography.

Mr. Guedalla's pictorial sense is a delight. And against his quite tangible backgrounds his figures live and move

in a manner, strange as it may seem, that is at once lifelike and comprehensible.

He is to be congratulated upon an extraordinarily fine book, and we, his readers, are to be congratulated upon the fact that he still remains sufficiently unabsorbed by his legal and political activities to make and hold for himself such an enviable place among the leaders in the front rank of literature.

ALICE SESSUMS LEOVY.

SAMPHIRE

BY JOHN COWPER POWYS.

(*Thomas Seltzer, 1922*)

MY personal recollection of John Cowper Powys dates back a good many years. He was lecturing on Russian literature, and he paced back and forth across a pitifully inadequate stage, shouting, waving his arms wildly, shaking his long ragged black hair back out of his eyes. In his Oxford gown, he looked very much like an excited crow, flapping its wings and cawing loudly.

From "Samphire," a book of poems which he has just lately published, I think there is still something of the cawing crow about Mr. Powys. The name "Samphire" is taken from the lines in "King Lear."

Half way down
Hangs one that gathers Samphire,
dreadful trade!
Methinks he seems no bigger than his
head.

My curiosity was aroused sufficiently to send me to the dictionary, and there I discovered that samphire is an herb, used as a salad on the island of St. Helena. It must be an indigestible ad-

junct to a meal; certainly the book named for it is enough to give one a spiritual mal de mer.

The poems in this volume are all very intense, pulsating with the strange dreadful forces of life. "Demogorgon" reads in this fashion:

I am the Devil of Notre Dame.
Salaam!
I dance my dance and I work my charm.
Salaam!
I cling to terror by the hair of her head,
I have taken Medusa to my bed.
I hug the Nightmare until she is dead.
Salaam!

At the beginning I stood by the Lord
God!
At the last I shall be the Worm of the
Pit
Uncurled
Who swallows Him and who swallows It
His World!"

And "The Ultimate" is in the same vein:

So this is the ultimate—
That we bleed with our backs to the
wall,
While the rats and weasels of fate
Eat at our liver and gall;
Oh shapes of terror and fear,
Oh shapes of loathing and lust
That gibber and jibe at us here
Ye break earth's shallow crust.
For the rats that again and again
Gnaw at each rib and joint
Of the vessel of our pain
Stop gasping at this point.
And in crowds they flee from the ship
That steers for the open sea
And turns the prow of its bleeding lip
Towards eternity.

There are several poems in the book written with the pseudo-simplicity of the imitation ballad, and at least one, "The Castle of Gathore," which smacks of Poe, or rather, of the Poe tradition, especially in the lines

Black murky pools about it lie.
And the trees are sick with its mystery;
And dead things are its floor.

Mr. Powys writes with a careful eye on his rhymes. A forced metrical scheme, such as he uses in "The Face," makes one realize that there is more

of a case to be made out for free verse than one sometimes believes. There is in free verse, a consistency about its vagaries, and a light self-confidence that Powys, laboriously rhyming doll with *fol de rol*, poll and troll, might well envy and seek to emulate, although of course, he never will.

ADALINE KATZ.

THE SECRET GLORY

BY ARTHUR MACHEN.

(*Alfred A. Knopf, 1922*)

IMAGINE a modern Marius, with symbolism and mysticism substituted for Epicurean philosophy and beauty, and you have a picture of Ambrose Meyrick, which is this book. A strange Beardsley like picture, if you will, with fantastic intricacies and inexplicable arabesques, woven together with strange threads that are only visible on the reverse, and yet withal a rather esoteric pattern.

This is without doubt, the most spiritual of Mr. Machen's works. In a way it marks a new departure from the fascinating word pictures and hermetic tales that have made the author what he is today. It proposes a theme rather old and hackneyed and worn and yet dignified and worthy through its long service. From the title alone, as well as its first few paragraphs, one senses it at once—the conflict between some form of idealism and the base materialism that immediately surrounds it.

One feels that the work is largely autobiographical. The detail is far too engrossed to be otherwise. The absence of plot to make room for the maximum amount of invectives against the public school, a sore subject of the author,

and the infinite care he takes in describing the "heavy" characters shows something more than the usual anecdotal feeling of a story-writer. It is a kind of work like "*Die Meister-singer*" or "*Les Contes Drolatiques*," a ferment, long brewing in the mind, but held in check until the writer is powerful enough to produce it.

The entire book is laid in a model English school, Lupton by name, and the chief characters, beside the youth, Ambrose Meyrick, are the masters, two or three students of the Stalky order and a thoughtful girl of the serving class. There is little or no dialogue, the bulk of the arguments taking place in the turbulent mind of Ambrose. No effort is made to keep the history of the youth in a chronological order. Conclusively, this work is an essay, not a story.

But charming as this work may be to some, it has several discouraging points. Mr. Machen is so obvious. Not satisfied with having his unpleasant characters damned by the reader, he needs must also mete them out some deserving punishment in the end. The High Usher, the most villainous person in the treatment, suffers ignominious shame and dies from it, one of the students, after a vainglorious career makes a most stupid step and also dies thereby, a school favorite, prophesied a scholar, turns out a writer of cheap fiction—

Nor does Ambrose escape this overflow of sensation. After suffering in the best of figurative fashion, he is literally pounced upon while in darkest Asia and crucified in Christ-like manner. It is rather disconcerting. One feels for Ambrose because he is the reflection of one's own self in a casual

phase. All, or nearly all, of us feel that we underwent the same mental anguish and misunderstanding, while in school. But very few of us expect to be crucified by a wandering band of Kurds in the great *Kevir*.

However, certain scenes in the book, far outweigh any tawdriness one might find elsewhere. The pilgrimage of Ambrose and his father to worship the Holy Cup of *Teilo Sant*. The story of *Ilar Sant* and the vision of Ambrose when he looks upon the Secret Glory. These excerpts are the true Machen, untarnished by prejudice or efforts at reason.

Again the author treats the Celtic Church, that beautiful amalgamation of Pagan color and beauty and Christian ideals, with veneration that is admirable. He writes of it, not as an academician, but as Malory, as Keats, as Wolfram von Eschenbach wrote about it and Wagner (his intentions were good) wrote for it. At the end of some of the scenes one breathes "*Curiluson*" with as much fervor as did Bors or Perceval at the House of Souls. Mr. Machen writes of the *Sangrael* with authority and with genuine awe at the same time. He tries to find no "key" to a religious schism in the story nor a foundation for the Episcopal church in its treatment. In a day and age of religious surgeons, it is good to find a votary.

At any rate, it awakens or revives an interest in the Grail legends and the hagiological folk lore of Little Britain. What images are called up of youthful devotion to ideals when the words "*Ffrynnon Ilar Bysgootwr*" are mentioned! What a remembrance of

the *Mabinogion* comes when one reads the song of the bell:

*Sant, sant, sant,
I sail from Syon
To Cybi Sant!*

It is indeed refreshing to find one who still believes, despite the economic necessities of life, in such exquisite, unpractical and unreasonable things as the Celtic church and its accoutrements.

JOHN HICKS MONTGOMERY.

PRELUDES AND SYMPHONIES

BY JOHN GOULD FLETCHER.

(Houghton Mifflin 1922)

IT is a pleasure to report that "Ir-radiations; Sand and Spray" and "Goblins and Pagodas", which first introduced Mr. Fletcher as a poet to be admired, have been reissued in one volume. Coming on the heels of the little volumes that Mr. Fletcher issued in 1913 in London before he had found himself, these poems in *Poetry*, *the Little Review* and *The Egoist*, were a delightful surprise to many of us. I shall remember for a long while opening a magazine at random in 1914 and seeing these lines:

Over the roof-tops race the shadows of
clouds;
Like horses the shadows of clouds charge
down the street.

This was at a time when I thought John Gould Fletcher wrote jingles. A few lines lower I saw:

Amid the vermilion pavilions, against the
jade balustrades.

I have had a healthy respect for Mr. Fletcher since that date. Though I am not sure that he has attained ultimate precision in his very individual style, I

have an ingrained conviction that he is one of the most sincere and—in cadences, phrases and passages though seldom in complete poems—one of the most successful poets of his day. He has written much bad poetry and there is a good deal of it in these two volumes reprinted as "Preludes and Symphonies." But here also are those fine lines and

images and cadences that stamped their author as a rare artist eight years ago. Anyone who wishes to know American poetry positively must read this volume or the two of which it is composed. John Gould Fletcher has struck some of the most beautiful chords in modern verse.

JOHN MCCLURE.

Books Received

THE ROOM, by G. B. Stern. *Knopf*, 1922.

LILY, by Hugh Wiley. *Knopf*, 1922.

BURIED CITIES, by Jennie Hall. *Macmillan*, 1922.

ALEXANDER'S BRIDGE, by Willa S. Cather. *Houghton-Mifflin*, 1922.

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS, by Delmar Gross Cooke. *Dutton*, 1922.

LOVE CONQUERS ALL, by Robert C. Benchley. *Holt*, 1922.

EUCLID'S OUTLINE OF SEX, by Wilbur P. Birdwood. *Holt*, 1922.

THE BOX OF GOD, by Lew Sarett. *Holt*, VTBB.

ENGLAND, MY ENGLAND, by D. H. Lawrence. *Seltzer*, 1922.

FANTASIA OF THE UNCONSCIOUS, by D. H. Lawrence. *Seltzer*, 1922.

DITTE, TOWARD THE STARS, by Martin Anderson Nexø. *Holt*, 1922.

THE ADVENTURES OF MAYA THE BEE, by Walderman Bousel, *Seltzer*, 1922.

HEARTBEAT, by Stacy Aumonier. *Boni and Liveright*, 1922.

AN ATTIC DREAMER, by Michael Monahan. *Mitchell Kennerley*, 1922.

ROLAND WHATELY, by Alec Waugh, *Macmillan*, 1922.

DRAMATIC LEGENDS AND OTHER POEMS, by Padraic Colum. *Macmillan*, 1922.

MY YEARS ON THE STAGE, by John Drew. *Dutton*, 1922.

JOHN ESTENC COOKE, VIRGINIAN, by Beaty. . *Columbia University Press*, 1922.

SWAN'S WAY, by Marcel Proust, translated by Charles Scott Monchief. 2 vols. *Holt*, 1922.